

THE DREAM OF THE FUTURE

by George M. Bailey

I have a dream of the future, one which is not at all unlike that of many librarians and one which I am certain is not unlike that of many of my colleagues in the humanities. Thus, it seemed desirable when my platform partner's comments were to be entitled "The Dust of the Past," to suggest that I would try to supplement his thoughts with some considerations about the facets of our dream for the future, hopefully indicating the kind of modern research library which is needed in the area of humanities.

I shall use the most comprehensive definition possible in my discussion about the modern research library and the humanities, which might vary from a restricted definition as merely a study of the classical languages and literature to a wide latitude covering subject areas which might otherwise be included in the social sciences and the arts. And in a number of academic institutions the trend toward interdisciplinary teaching leads to the involvement of the pure sciences in the teaching of the humanities. Thus, the consideration which follows in regard to the modern research library and the humanities might readily apply to other closely related areas of the university's program. Also, in my comments I shall attempt to reflect on the situation here at Rice since your concern during this week, I am pleased to note, is the rededication of the Fondren Library in an attempt to concentrate your attention on the role of your library in the development of excellence in your university. Through this academic festival, we would hope that your thoughts will reflect on the role of Rice's Research Library as you read the objectives of the university in the "Ten Year Plan for Rice University." We hope you will not overlook the library's strategic role as you read such statements as "Rice University aspires to a level of excellence. . . . A university should be primarily a place in which the student may acquire a universal education which, above all, is the true preparation of knowledge." It is satisfying to note that in the development of the humanities program Rice can state that it has "greatly increased library holdings and service,"¹ that

the percentage of library support at Rice appears to be quite a favorable one, that according to the study of *Resources of Texas Libraries* by Edward Holley and Donald Hendricks "the Rice collections constitute a good working research library."² And it is also worthy to note the statement that "the library must meet the test of adequacy for research which is a more demanding test than its adequacy for classroom instruction."³

But, I would like to take the liberty of raising the question whether an institution with somewhat less than 600,000 volumes can accept the honors noted above for its library, or should we really state that the Fondren Library has a solid foundation on which it must seriously build in order to support the present and future plans of Rice University?

Traditionally, the university library has been seen as a collection of books existing largely to support the teaching program of the institution. All too frequently the teaching faculty and administration of the institution have planned the introduction of new programs and have provided financial support for these programs without regard for the strategic role which the library should perform in the educational program. In an article in a recent issue of the *Wilson Library Bulletin*, entitled "The Crisis of the Academic Library," Henry Steele Commager, the noted historian, stated: "Libraries are expected, nay required, to respond to the proliferation of courses, departments, and institutes; to work up collections of whatever new 'offerings' the university submits—now African studies, or the Middle East, now the urban crisis, or outer space. Faculty pressures are constant, but they are rarely limited by administration counterpressure. On the contrary, administrations yield to the seductions of foundations, or to the importunity of special interest or pressure groups, and take on highly specialized and often grotesquely inappropriate enterprises for which support (and often interest) evaporates after five or ten years. . . . Now to the faculty, foundation, and public pressures is added student pressure to give courses that 'relate' to current interest or 'respond' to current needs—terms of reference that almost guarantee that the relevant literature libraries acquire will be journalistic and ephemeral."⁴

At the same time, the library and its staff have all too often acted as a passive factor in the institution, providing reserve books for the support of classroom instruction whenever faculty members requested them, giving minimum reference service, assisting students in finding materials to do research for papers. For most

students the library has too often been only a study hall. With this attitude, the administration has too often neglected the library in making plans for "excellence" in the university. Too often a student secured his "education" without really becoming familiar with the wealth of learning that can be found in his library. In the past, and even today, how many of our faculty members honestly and continually thought—and think—of the library as a tool providing the wealth of information in support of their research program and a tool through which their students can develop the intellectual ability to continue their education as a result of having had the encouragement of faculty and the freedom to investigate the wealth of knowledge of the past, to reflect upon that knowledge, and to become sophisticated in their judgment of facts and information presented?

However, there are signs of the fulfillment of our dream of the future. The situation in the modern research library is showing very satisfactory signs of change, which must be encouraged. The needs of libraries are now receiving national attention in such legislation as the Higher Education Facilities Act, which has provided large sums of assistance in the construction of buildings to better house the rapidly expanding collections and the services needed in the modern research library. The Higher Education Act of 1965 is providing small amounts of funds for local academic library development, for support of cooperative programs to make available on a regional basis the information and collections which are beyond the scope of the financial ability of the local institutions, and for support of national and international programs of cooperation through the Library of Congress, and for scholarships to encourage additional education for librarianship.

Funds are being provided for the encouragement of educational training of prospective librarians, for the advanced training of persons already in the field, all resulting in increased availability of better trained personnel to provide the possibility of better services and support for our educational programs.

In order to save time and provide better service, an increasing number of libraries are engaging in technological innovations. In the areas of acquisitions, cataloging, and circulation of library materials, unit record and computer assisted programs are being introduced. Numerous studies are being made with regard to information retrieval, ultimately hoping to provide programs for the assistance of research activities. Texas academic libraries are to be commended for their activities in all of these areas.

But the inadequacy of these efforts has been noted by the recent report of the National Advisory Commission on Libraries, which listed a number of objectives in a national program for an adequate library and information system, including adequate library and information services for formal education, materials to support research in all fields at all levels, adequate bibliographic access to the nation's research and informational resources, and adequately trained personnel for the varied and changing demands of librarianship.⁵ As a result of the National Advisory Commission's recommendation, a bill has been introduced into Congress and public hearings are now being held to establish a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. The proposal states that the Commission shall have the primary responsibility for developing the plans for adequate library and information services to meet the needs of libraries in the United States, and advising the appropriate government agencies with regard to this program.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, under the chairmanship of Clark Kerr, issued a special report and recommendation in December 1968, in which it emphasized the need to drastically increase federal support of higher education in the next decade, pointing out that a "basic tool of any college or university is its library. The current expansion of knowledge, with the resultant massive explosion in literature in all fields, has sharply increased the cost of even the minimal library for an undergraduate college. Major universities with their heavy emphasis on graduate education and research, face even greater increases in their annual library expenditures. The higher education law does provide support for college and research libraries, but the level of funding has been low."⁶ It recommended not only that the full authorization of \$50,000,000 a year, double the present appropriation, be provided for library support under Title II A of the Higher Education Act in 1970-1971, but also that it be increased to \$100,000,000 by 1976.

Likewise, Dr. Alice Rivlin, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, in her report entitled "Toward a Long-Range Plan for Federal Financial Support for Higher Education," recommended the strengthening of graduate education and research, with federal support (excluding research) tripling from present support of 3.7 billion dollars annually to 11 billion dollars by 1976.⁷ It is obvious that tremendous additional sums must be provided for research purposes, especially for the humanities, which have been sadly

neglected during the past decade of overemphasis on its support of scientific research, and with a tripling of support for higher education, at least a proportionate increase is essential for library development if the standard of excellence is to be the goal.

Thus, we witness, in studies of the needs of higher education, a growing tendency to become aware of the needs of the modern research library.

As part of the awareness of the needs, in the fulfillment of our dream of the future, there is developing a closer working relationship between the teaching faculty and the library faculty. Several factors are involved in this change. First of all there appears to be a more general recognition of the contribution which the library can make to the educational process, a greater involvement of the library collections in the teaching programs of the faculty, and increasing dialogue between teaching faculty and librarians regarding means by which the library can support the teaching and research function of the institution. There is also greater involvement of librarians in the formulation of educational policy, and a steady rise in the status of librarians in the academic world as a result of efforts of professional organizations, and increased education of the members of the profession, many of whom have taken advanced degrees in both library and subject fields. Librarians are becoming less passive in their supportive role in education and are becoming more aggressive in their efforts to bring the resources of their realm of responsibility to the attention of the administration, teaching faculty, and students.

And there is no better time than the present, as the decades of the 1960's and 1970's will probably be noted for the increased attention given to the changing role of higher education and research. Whereas much emphasis was placed on scientific research in the 1950's, the neglect of research in the humanities and its necessary support have come into prominent focus in the past few years. Higher education is now undergoing a period of tremendous challenge; it is a national concern. Both students and faculties are showing serious concern about the educational program in which they are involved rather than the willingness to accept their traditional and more passive role. Discussions involve the possibilities of interdisciplinary programs, possible elimination of courses in the traditional sense, and the desire for greater innovation in the academic program.

In such a period of ferment and change, it is essential that libraries and librarians play a more strategic role. Librarians

must not only be kept fully informed but should vigorously engage in the academic dialogue to insure their participation in the educational process. In doing so, first priority must be given to the development of not only an adequate but rather an excellent collection for support of the educational program. Discussion continues as to what can be considered an adequate collection for various phases of the educational program.

Although our concern is with the modern research library, I would like to comment briefly on the undergraduate needs as a basis for the development of the research library.

Few people are still willing to accept the minimum standard of 50,000 volumes for an undergraduate program. The American Council on Education suggested the minimum collection of 100,000 volumes several years ago. But, with the information explosion, the resulting and increasing variety of publications, and the increasing variety of teaching programs at the undergraduate level, I would question the acceptance of an undergraduate collection as really adequate until it more nearly reaches a size of 250,000 volumes.

The Council of Chief Librarians of the City University of New York after careful consideration of the question of adequacy of collections, determined that a senior college should open its doors with a collection of 100,000 volumes for its first six hundred students and approximately 30 fields of undergraduate study.⁸ As the student body and the programs increase, resulting in the increase in faculty numbers, the collection should increase rapidly beyond the opening figure.

At the same time that the concern for undergraduate programs exists, the most prominent point often made to faculty members when newly appointed is the value of the library collection for research. More than ever before faculty are forced to engage in research not only to support more effective teaching, but also to contribute to their own knowledge and to enhance themselves in their profession. It is commonly stated that faculty recruitment and retention is determined by the ability of the library collection to meet these needs. Although it is impossible for the institution to meet all research needs and a great deal more cooperation is essential in order to improve the access to valuable research collections, the local institution must continue to strive to satisfy at least the preliminary faculty research. A collection of less than 250,000 volumes cannot readily meet this need.

There are, however, other compelling factors in the development

of stronger collections at the undergraduate level. The student must be able, in today's increasingly complex world, to encounter the whole range of man's knowledge, not only in support of his classroom programs or to supplement those programs, but to provide the opportunity for the advancement of any facet of his knowledge. Furthermore, the student should also find in the collection the opportunity to increase his knowledge in his own special interest fields. The collection should reflect the subjects with which the student population is presently concerned.

The question of collections' support for graduate education and the resulting research needs is one of much greater complexity. In addition to the kind of collection needed to support undergraduate education, it has been agreed by the Council of Chief Librarians of the City University of New York that a minimum of 25,000 volumes should be provided for the support of each doctoral program and 5,600 volumes should be acquired for each master's program. Keep in mind that these are recommendations for minimum collections, strongly supported by fact, rather than argument, when one merely notes that the institutions with the larger collections, such as Harvard, Columbia, and Yale, do not discontinue adding to their already wealthy collections.

Also striking is the fact that the United States Office of Education in providing grants under the Higher Education Act, Title II A, indicates the need for a collection of a half million volumes for the first doctoral program (which is in accord with the recommendation of Holley and Hendricks in *Resources of Texas Libraries*) and 50,000 volumes for each additional program.⁹

However, discussions regarding collection size do not usually consider the extensive increases which should and do take place when librarians are requested to develop special collections for various purposes, often not directly related to the teaching or research programs but of tremendous value in a research library of excellence. Nor do we often remember the needs of the faculty in support of their continuing research.

It would not be difficult to support a statement that any institution providing a variety of doctoral level programs should rapidly strive to develop a collection of a million volumes. The study by Robert B. Downs on "Doctoral Programs and Library Resources," published in *College and Research Libraries* in March 1966, shows a great deal of relationship between the size of the library collection and the number of doctoral programs.¹⁰

With these brief comments as background, let us now look at

some of the factors in fulfilling our dream of the future—the research library which will provide the excellence called for in your plans at Rice University. The dream of the future is a research library developed by a working triangle of (1) administrators, (2) teaching faculty and students, and (3) library faculty. If this combination works well together, the modern research library will achieve its dream of becoming the intellectual workshop of the university.

One goal of the librarians in their dream is well stated in a short book by Guy R. Lyle, Librarian of Emory University, entitled "The President, the Professor, and the College Library," when it notes that librarians must have the full cooperation of the college administration and faculty in order to participate fully in the process of education, to build fine collections, and to encourage use of library materials extensively and wisely.¹¹

Mr. Lyle discusses the relationships between the librarians and the administration, especially the president. The dream of excellence for the library will be more readily realized if the librarian is fully recognized by the president as one of his top-level administrators. High level administrative and educational discussions should involve the head librarian. The university's president must assume responsibility for providing the formal means of communication such as representation of the librarian on the administrative council or the academic council if there is one, on the curriculum planning committee, on any committee which would be concerned with the development of research programs or institutional policies. The librarian has responsibility for providing library support for new programs. When the university plans or adopts new programs, or changes its programs, it must be concerned with the whole range of implications for the university. The whole range cannot be covered without involvement of the expertise of the librarian, who cannot be ready to provide support for any program when it is initiated unless he has also been kept sufficiently informed so that he too can plan ahead.

It is frequently stated that the librarian should report to the academic dean because the president is too busy and the academic dean is more closely in touch with the needs for curriculum and research support. Should not the librarian be as closely in touch with these needs at all times as the academic dean? Should not the librarian be involved directly in discussion resulting in programs which are responsible for the existence of these needs?

A second hope of the librarian and his staff is a close working

relationship with the teaching faculty. This is not easy to achieve. The teaching faculty is most directly concerned with instruction of students or with research activities and neglects to spend the desirable time on its role in collection development. Faculty members often neglect their responsibility for encouraging the student in effective library use in order to prepare him for the continuing educational process which should take place after his formal education is completed.

Although the library faculty can be kept well informed regarding programs for which collection support is needed and although the final responsibility for collection development rests with the head librarian, the teaching faculty members are the experts in the literature of their respective fields. They must assume responsibility for careful selection of new publications. This part of their responsibility is more easily achieved than the second role, that of filling in gaps in the collection to support the university's program. Although the teaching faculty member rather readily comments on the needs of the library collection, he finds it more difficult to fulfill his role in suggesting the means of meeting these needs. How great it would be if the person who says that a part of our collection lacks materials would turn his comments into a positive statement indicating the exact materials needed. How wonderful it would be to convince the teaching faculty members to look upon themselves as bibliographers also.

The Library Committee has been used as a formal means by which the teaching faculty can be encouraged to participate more actively in the library's development. However, its concern should go far beyond budget allocation. It must be more concerned with the role of recommending library policies in relation to the development of resources of instruction and research, acting as liaison between the library and the faculty and students, interpreting the library's services to the university clientele, and keeping the librarian informed concerning the needs of the instructional staff and students.

Not to be overlooked is the role of the student, who should be represented on the library committee, and possibly also have a separate library committee. With the growth of students' demands for involvement in the decision-making process of the university, the library should be one area where they can actively and constructively participate not only in making recommendations for collection development but also for policies regarding library use. The largest number of consistent library users are the students.

Therefore, it seems logical that their opinions should be expressed not only directly but through a representative body.

I do not intend to overlook the third part of the triangular working relationship, the librarian who must fulfill his share of the dream.

In achieving the above relationships, the librarian does not lack for responsibility in the coordination of the selection and development program. He should be able to spend a great deal of time with teaching faculty members, inquiring about the needs and encouraging them to perform their role in meeting the needs. If he is seeking to establish a close working relationship with the teaching faculty, he must strive to meet the qualifications for such a relationship. As pointed out in an article by R. D. Galloway in the *AAUP Bulletin*, in March 1967, the academic librarian must improve his qualifications along with the improvement of his academic situation.¹² As the teaching faculty is required to continue research and to publish the results, so should the librarian. A scholarly attitude on the part of the librarian is essential in the development of a good working relationship. However, as the teaching faculty member is provided with time in which to engage in research for possible publication, so should the library faculty member, if he is to assume the scholarly role. And the proof is that the quality of persons coming into the field is improving as the academic situation is improving. More persons with advanced degrees in subject areas, in addition to the library degree, are being added to the profession.

But, at least as important, if the proper relationship is established between the library faculty and the teaching faculty, is the aggressiveness with which the librarian promotes the relationship. He must actively participate in all the formal means of communication provided for him by the faculty, students, and administrators. He must also spend a great deal of time using informal means of contacting the other groups in his academic world, continually searching for means by which the library collection can be developed and by which the library services can be improved. He must use every means available to keep the various groups informed about the resources and services and about the needs for improving them. He must continually strive not only to build excellence in the collection and services, but also to gather the best available staff to assist in these activities. He must find all the means available to maintain a scholarly attitude on the part of

the library faculty and a service-oriented attitude for all members of the staff.

The above goal of a good working relationship is more readily attained if one can assume the achievement of some other goals. But it is difficult to clearly separate the different goals.

A second and strategic goal is the appropriate financial support. Various formulas have been established to determine what the financial support will be. But such formulas tend to be quantitative rather than qualitative. The excellent modern research library cannot be determined by percentages of support or any other quantitative figure. If excellence is a qualitative factor, the library's excellence should also be qualitative. Rice University has the reputation for quality and, in many ways, the Fondren Library has been supported to develop qualitative excellence, but we too often refer only to the quantitative factors in determining excellence. Most formulas, such as the one mentioned for the City University of New York, refer only to minimum quantities. After these are achieved, the move toward excellence must increasingly be judged on qualitative terms. As Dr. Rivlin states in her report, previously noted: "While it is difficult to define quality precisely in higher education, it is clear that increasing the effectiveness of the higher education offered to students necessitates increasing the resources available to institutions to attract qualified faculty and to improve facilities, libraries, and teaching methods."¹³ And let us not hesitate to emphasize that quality can be secured if we are willing to accept the fact that the means of securing the result will be expensive. Librarians have never denied that excellent research libraries are costly.

A third goal in the librarian's dream of the future is adequate space not only to house the collections but also to provide the extensive services needed to support the instructional and research programs of the university. Almost every academic library in the country seems to be planning for expansion of facilities. Huge sums of money have been and must continue to be provided for improved facilities. But, even today, library buildings are too often planned for limited service rather than excellence. Too often, a library building is constructed without proper planning for the future and the building is hardly completed when additional planning is needed for future facilities. This is especially true in the research institution.

Thus, our dream of the future can be stated simply, if we are

going to provide the modern research library to meet the needs of the humanities.

1. A close working relationship involving teaching faculty, library faculty, research faculty, students, and administration.

2. A program of collection development, striving not for minimum adequacy but for excellence, involving the close working relationship noted above, and fully supported with the necessary finances.

3. An adequately trained staff, with librarians who are service-oriented scholars, who are given the excellent clerical and sub-professional staff support to permit them to engage in the scholarly pursuits of their profession and to work closely with the university's library clientele.

4. A facility which has been planned to provide adequate space for housing the collection, to provide sufficient and comfortable furniture and surroundings in situations to encourage serious study and research, and with convenient access to the collections and services.

These goals, simply stated, involve many complex factors about which the librarian spends years in trying to become more knowledgeable. He continually strives to create the desirable understanding from the university's library clientele in fulfilling the goals. And the result, depending on the success of the efforts—the modern research library of excellence—will provide the collection and services for the support of the humanities.

NOTES

1. Rice University, *Ten Year Plan for Rice University, 1965-1975* (Houston, Texas, 1964), pp. 4, 8.

2. Edward G. Holley and Donald D. Hendricks, *Resources of Texas Libraries* (Austin, Texas, 1968), p. 45.

3. Rice University, op. cit., p. 31.

4. Henry Steele Commager, "The Crisis of the Academic Library," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, XLIII, No. 6 (February, 1969), 522.

5. "Library Services for the Nation's Needs: toward fulfillment of a national policy (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Libraries, October, 1968)," *ALA Bulletin*, LXIII, No. 1 (January, 1969), 67-94.

6. "Quality and Equality: New Levels of Federal Responsibility for Higher Education," A special report and recommendations by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, December, 1968, printed in the *Congressional Record*, Vol. 115, No. 25 (February 6, 1969), H835.

7. Alice Rivlin, *Toward a Long-Range Plan for Federal Financial Support for Higher Education*; A Report to the President (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. v.

8. Council of Chief Librarians, City University of New York, *Minutes* (January 13, 1969).

9. U. S. Office of Education, *Instructions for Preparation and Submission of Applications for Basic, Supplemental, and Special Purpose Grants: Introduction. Fiscal Year 1969* (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. 6.

10. Robert B. Downs, "Doctoral Programs and Library Resources," *College and Research Libraries*, XXVII, No. 2 (March, 1966), 124-128.

11. Guy R. Lyle, *The President, the Professor, and the College Library* (New York, 1963).

12. R. D. Galloway, "Academic Benefits for Academic Librarians," *AAUP Bulletin*, LIII (March, 1967), 61-63.

13. Rivlin, op. cit., p. vi.